

THE BEACON

FOR SCHOOL AND HOME

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Antonio's Last Violin

By Dorothy Whitehead Hough

FOR years Antonio had been the best violin maker in the village; yes, the best in the whole country. His fame had spread far beyond his own country, even across mountains and seas to all parts of the world where there were musicians to play upon his sweet-toned instruments. He was an old man now, and much of the work of the shop was entrusted to the young men who were apprenticed to his craft. His two sons worked with him, and some of the violins which they made were almost as fine as their father's.

"If it bears the mark of Antonio's shop," music-masters would say when choosing an instrument, "it is the best that you can buy anywhere in the world." Antonio was proud of his reputation, which years of hard work had earned for him, and many times he admonished the young men to use only the finest materials and the best workmanship in every instrument which they fashioned. Now that he was old he must trust them more and more with the trade which he had established. He tried to share with them all that he knew; tried to teach them all the secrets of his success.

Many famous musicians had visited Antonio's shop and ordered violins from him, but he was very old now and had almost decided to leave his workbench to his friends who sat all day in the sun. His old fingers were weary; he wanted to leave the shop to his sons. These were the thoughts which were in his mind as a young man entered his shop and stood watching him at his work. "Master, will you make a violin for me?" the young man asked. "I am old, boy. I would leave my bench and rest in the sun."

"Master, may I play for you?" The stranger did not wait for an answer, but taking an almost finished violin from the hands of an apprentice he tucked it under his chin and began to play.

"Stop, stop!" cried Antonio. "Play no more on that fiddle! Antonio will make



Courtesy of Boston Evening Transcript

THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION'S NEW BUILDING AT
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

*The fourth window from the front on the fifth floor is in the home office
of THE BEACON*

you a violin — the finest violin he has ever built."

"Thank you, good master."

"Thank me not. It is I who should thank you for inspiring these old hands to put forth their best skill once again."

"When shall I come, sir, to receive my treasure?"

"That I cannot tell, but when it is finished you will hear me calling you. What is your name, lad?"

"Guiseppe Revello, master."

"Your violin shall call you when it is finished, Guiseppe. I must commence it at once, for I am old; it is much that I have promised."

"Good-bye, master; I shall come when my treasure calls me. 'The Treasure' will call me when it is finished."

Antonio sat dreaming for a long time after the young musician had left, but

at last he lifted his head and seemed to be listening.

"Ah," he said in a half whisper, "I shall make a violin for Guiseppe so perfect that God's own angels might play upon it."

Then, rising, Antonio took his hat and a heavy staff from the end of his bench and went out of his shop, down to the river where great sycamore trees grew beside the water. He struck one after another of their great trunks with his staff, listening intently to the sounds made by his blows. One after another he passed them by, but at last he smiled with satisfaction and, taking a knife from his pocket, he carved the letter A in the bark.

He walked up the hillside to a grove of maples, and there he again struck tree after tree, listening as before until he

found one that satisfied his ear, then he marked it, and climbed the mountain to where the pines grew tall and straight above all the other trees.

"Too long have I left the choosing of the trees to others," he muttered to himself. "They cannot learn; they have no ear."

Antonio had taken his apprentices into the woods with him many times, trying to teach them all he knew about the choice of trees that would make the best violins, but he had never been able to give them his own acute ears that could tell by the sound of his staff upon their trunks whether they would give the finest tones to the instruments which his skilled fingers could build. This was a gift that God had given to Antonio, and he could not give it to others.

Antonio returned to his shop and called his helpers. He watched the trees, which he had chosen, being cut down and made into the thin boards which he required for his work. Day after day he spent at his bench, and little by little "The Treasure" took form as he spent himself upon it: sometimes, when it was almost finished, he would pluck the strings or draw a bow across them.

"The tone is not perfect yet," he would mutter to himself. "It may be that Antonio has indeed lost his skill."

Then he would remember the playing of Guiseppe and return to his task with new energy.

At last, as the first faint ray of dawn crept into the shop one morning, many weeks after Guiseppe's visit to the shop, it fell upon the white head of Antonio bent over the violin which he held in his hands. He rose slowly, and carrying the precious treasure to the window, he drew the bow across the strings. Antonio, although he was not a skilled musician, poured out his soul in a hymn to the dawn, and his ears rejoiced in the beauty of the full rich tones that came from the soul of the violin.

"Aha-ha!" The sound was like a sob of exultation. Antonio had achieved his masterpiece.

"Aha-ha!" came an echoing sigh from the door, where Guiseppe had appeared as though by magic.

"Master, it is perfect! A Treasure for the ages!"

"So! You heard the voice of the violin calling you? You have come to claim your treasure."

Very slowly and tenderly, as a mother might give her baby into the hands of the priest for baptism, Antonio laid the violin in Guiseppe's outstretched arms.

A few weeks later people from far and near were gathered in the great theater of the city, waiting for a new musician to play for them. An old man, with white hair, sat in a box near the stage, gripping the brass rail with thin fingers.

"There he is; that's the master, Antonio," came in whispers from many parts of the house, but Antonio did not hear them. He was waiting for Guiseppe — Guiseppe and "The Treasure." When the musician finally appeared a sigh of hope and exultation came from the lips of the old violin maker.

Guiseppe played! There was no applause, scarcely an interruption, as rhapsody followed serenata, — songs without words that spoke to the souls of men. There was the hushed and tense listening that men have for the voice of God. But at last these people could bear no more — a sob filled the darkened room; the greatest applause that genius and art could ever know.

The old man's head sank on his hands as his lips whispered a prayer.

"Now, O God, my work is finished; my soul has spoken for the ages. Amen!"

The next morning Antonio entered the shop, as was his custom, but he did not take his place at the scarred bench where he had worked for many, many years. Calling his sons and apprentices to him he addressed them affectionately.

"My boys, these old hands will never touch the craftsman's tools again. The last violin that I shall ever make on earth is finished; but you, my lads, are young. Remember this: Antonio has always worked to make the best instruments that could be made. I trust my name to you — let no imperfect work leave your hands, and the reward of your labors will be the knowledge that you have given your best to the world."

Turning away from them he walked slowly out of the shop, never to return, for he knew that his last violin was rightly called "The Treasure."

The Cat and the Captain

BY ELIZABETH COATSWORTH

CHAPTER I



The Cat was furious. Not a door or window of the house was open. He went to the front door and mewed. He went to the side door (which was never used) and mewed. Then he went to the back door and there he mewed loudest and longest. He could hear Susannah walking around the kitchen, singing to herself. She was always singing to herself like a bumblebee without any words, — unless something happened to make her excited. Then she made up songs, mostly complaining ones telling how she felt. The Cat knew that Susannah heard him there at her door with his feet in the damp, but she was glad to keep him out. If only the

captain were home, he would call "Susannah! Ship ahoy! Lower the gangway to take on passengers!" But the Captain had taken his cane and gone to see his married daughter. Goodness knew when he'd be back!

The Cat picked his way across the grass, shaking the wet off his feet, for it had been raining. Poor Cat, he hated it! He was thinking of the cushioned chair indoors by the fire, where he loved to sit watching the flames with sleepy eyes and purring to himself. But he didn't feel like purring now. He climbed up the lilac bush. He knew just where to put each small paw, just how much spring to give, and how deep to stick his claws in the bark. He did everything beautifully. But the leaves shook raindrops down his neck and made him bristle his whiskers. He got on a low branch and looked in at the kitchen window. There was Susannah rolling dough for the biscuits the captain liked. She was little and old and black, and she wore on her head a big red bandanna. When she saw the Cat, she began to laugh, and stick her finger at him. He could hear her singing:

"Ole Mister Cat, he clumb up a tree.
What you want, Cat, starin' in at me?
Yo' won't git hurted by a li'l nice rain,
So when yo' gets tired, jus' yo' climb down again!"

The cat saw it was no use. Susannah did not like him, and he knew very well she had several good reasons for it. He mewed one last mew, just in case she should change her mind. Then he gave her a look, and went down the lilac, head first. He knew now he'd have to wait until the Captain came back, but he wouldn't forget Susannah's meanness — not he! He picked his way through the grass, lifting his feet high and walking around the puddles, and went in under the verandah by the little opening that only he knew about. There, out of any one's sight, he sat, switching his big black tail. Perhaps he was planning how he could get even with Susannah.

(To be continued)

Sweet William

BY VERA GRISIER McCULLY

John William heard Grandmother say "Sweet Williams grow so fast this year." So William thought, "This very day I must go tell Grandmother dear That William is a splendid name, But any real live boy can see That with the 'sweet' it's not the same; Brave William's best for boys like me!"

The Mystery

BY MARJORIE DILLON

My garden's planted, row on row,
And while I watch its needs,
I mean to do detective work
And see who plants the weeds!



THE CROW'S NEST

BY
WAITSTILL
HASTINGS
SHARP

Text: And I, if I be
lifted up, will draw
all men unto me.
—John 12:32.

THIS is the beginning of Holy Week. At two times in all the long year more people in the world are thinking of the same things than at any other time. At Christmas we think of Love and the most precious gift that love ever brought to this old world — Joshua Ben Joseph, the little Hebrew carpenter-boy. At Easter we think of Faith and the most precious gift that Faith ever brought to this old world — the example of a man who gave his life to prove his trust in God and his faith in men. That man was Joshua Ben Joseph, grown up and called Jesus. When I think of the greatest man who has ever lived I like to remember him by his real name, Joshua Ben Joseph. This was the name he was known by to all his friends in Nazareth, where he was born and worked as a carpenter and where he began to think and speak about the Happy Life.

There are some lessons for us in Holy Week. Recall for a moment the leaders and the statesmen and the generals whom we study about in school. Let your mind ramble over the names and the sizes of the biggest ships and tallest buildings and longest canals, the wonderful discoveries of new lands and new wealth and hundreds of inventions.

Then when your mind is full of the wonder of the world, ask yourself whose life was the most precious life in our Christian history and whom we remember on our two holy-days in the year. As you now, the Christian church is cut up into hundreds of queer little churches called "sects." They all believe differently. But on Easter and Christmas they all agree to honor one man — the Jew, Joshua Ben Joseph.

We remember the life of this world-carpenter because he said that the Happy life is this: To learn the truth and to love our fellowmen.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself."

And we remember this world-carpenter because he lived and died for this faith of his, and as he followed Truth and love to the cross he said:

"And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

And men, through twenty centuries, have met the duty and the temptation of life, drawn to the high example of this man whom we remember in Holy Week.

And So Can I

BY NELLIE GOODE

The little birds sing merrily,
Tho' snowflakes fill the air;
They gaily fly from tree to tree,
Nor doubt the Father's care.
Their silver notes are ringing
Like flutes within the sky.
The little birds keep singing,
And

so
can
I.

The little bee works busily
Among the flowers gay.
She never looks for sympathy,
Nor stops for rest or play.
She never thinks of shirking,
As she lays her harvest by.
The little bee keeps working,
And

so
can
I.

The little brook laughs on its way
Toward the shining sea.
It scatters blessings all the day
So lavishly and free.
The thirsting cows are quaffing
Cool drinks from its supply,
The little brook keeps laughing,
And

so
can
I.

A Clever London Dog

A LITTLE skye terrier in London, who very often went to ride with his mistress in cabs, decided one day to take a little stroll all by himself.

He went quite a long distance from his well-known streets and soon found that he had lost his way.

After running up one street and down another for some time, and then stopping still and trying to remember which way he had come, he suddenly had a very bright idea. There were some cabs. Why should he not ride home, as he always did with his mistress?

No sooner thought than done. He jumped up into a hansom cab and when the cabman got down off his seat and came around to look at him, he saw that he had on a silver collar. On that collar was his name and address. The cabman drove to that number and found the mistress, who had been anxiously hunting for him. Imagine her surprise when she saw her little doggie riding home alone in a cab.—Selected.



Florence Buck, D.D.

BY THE EDITOR

Many of our readers today will remember Dr. Buck who was Editor of *The Beacon* from 1912 to 1924 and will recall her weekly messages to our boys and girls. The very last bit of work she did was for this paper, when she wrote a brief note introducing her successor in the office of editor. That note was published in *The Beacon* for October 4, 1925, and on the 12th day of that month Dr. Buck died.

Now it is proposed that an opportunity be given to her friends to show the esteem in which she was held by raising a fund for the purpose of furnishing the rooms of the Department of Religious Education — of which *The Beacon* office is one — on the fifth floor of our new building at 25 Beacon Street, a picture of which is shown on the first page of this number.

Dr. Buck loved the beautiful, and no more fitting tribute to her memory could be devised than beautiful furnishings for the rooms of the Department of which she was for so long a time a member and to the activities of which she gave of herself so ably and so generously. Our schools have two memorials of her in *The Story of Jesus*, which she wrote, and *The Beacon Hymnal*, which she edited. But her friends feel that there should be some constant reminder of her in our new building and so they are planning "The Florence Buck Memorial."

Readers of *The Beacon* will surely wish to have some part in this good work. A letter is being sent to the superintendents of all our church schools. A small offering from each child would mean a generous offering from your school. Any of our readers who are not connected with church schools may send their offerings to The Editor of *The Beacon*, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.



THE BEACON CLUB

THE EDITOR'S POST BOX

Dear Club Members: We have so many interesting letters this week that it is very difficult to decide which to print. I think we will begin with a letter from a teacher who has very nice things to say about her class of girls.

THE EDITOR.

57 NORTH MAIN ST.,
UXBRIDGE, MASS.

THE EDITOR OF *The Beacon*: I am sending letters written by the members of my class. They all want a button very much, for they enjoy *The Beacon* every Sunday. We take the last ten minutes of Sunday school to look over the paper, and I usually read the letters and jokes. They are dear little girls and the teacher looks forward to Sunday school each week. Some are in grade five and two in grade four, and five of the six had perfect attendance this whole year. Sometimes they have come in terrible snow storms, when paths were not broken out in the country. We should all enjoy wearing your button, and if you choose they may all be sent to me.

Yours truly,

(MRS.) ANNA C. SHARPE.

The names and addresses of the girls are Lois Chase, 16 Farnum St.; Pauline R. Donald, Uxbridge Inn; Alice and Marguerite Bridges, 1 Marywood St.; Barbara Thompson, Mendon St. They would all be glad to receive letters from other girls of about their ages, — ten and eleven. Another member of the church school in Uxbridge who has had perfect attendance for six years is Doris O'Marrah, 101 North Main St.

412 NO. PINE AVE.,
CHICAGO, ILL.

Dear Editor: I should like to become a member of the Beacon Club and wear one of its pins. I go to the Unitarian Church in Chicago. The pastor of our church is Rev. David Williams. My Sunday-school teacher's name is Mrs. Hance. I am eleven years of age and I enjoy *The Beacon* very much.

Sincerely yours,

ESTHER WILLIAMS.

Dear Scribblers: Eleanor Healey, of Leominster, Mass., has sent a contribution for our series on great musicians. Marnelle Haynes, the author of the poem, "In Spring," lives in Collins, Arkansas.

THE EDITOR.

Handel

BY ELEANOR HEALEY (AGE 12)

George Frederick Handel was born in Halle, Germany, in 1685. When only twelve years of age he played before the Court at Berlin. Later, he studied in Italy for three years and then he went to England where he spent the rest of his life. He composed over forty operas before doing his most famous work, "The Messiah." Five years before his death he became blind, but this did not prevent his continuing his work as a composer. In 1759 he died and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

In Spring

BY MARNELLE HAYNES (14 YRS.)

In yonder vale, by the willow tree,
There's a spot that's always been dear
to me;
Where the tender young ferns grow
healthy and green,
And the timid blue violets often are
seen
Around the brook that ripples and runs
And shimmers and glides and shines in
the sun.

Here I have often delighted to roam,
Searching for violets deep in the loam;
Lingering beside the cool brook in the
breeze,
Loitering here in the shade of the trees;
Listening to phoebes and mocking birds
call, —
The beauties of nature, and loving them
all.

Here I have sat in the fading light,
Sat and dreamed till the coming of night;
Watching the sun turn red in the west
And the meadow lark come home to her
nest;
Hearing the jaybird's afternoon call,
And other bird songs, and loving them
all.

PUZZLERS

Enigma

I am composed of 12 letters and am the name of a popular book.

My 2, 3, 6, 9, 11 is worn on the foot.

My 10, 8, 4, 5 is a place dear to all.

My 12, 1, 7, 3 indicates grade.

R. E. S.

Charade

My *First* will make poetic rime
With any word that ends like chime.

My *Second* is a bit of string,
Or fragment of some other thing.

My *Whole* has hands; around its face
Those two hands move with changeless
pace.

CHARLES NEVERS HOLMES.

Twisted Flowers

1. Illy fo hte avalyl.
2. Ptilsu.
3. Fdaolifd.
4. Rnsausice.
5. Ahnhityc.
6. Oeicur.
7. Ospnordw.
8. Ogdillia.
9. Leualande.
10. Seomso.

MARJORIE P. ELLICOTT.
(Bulfinch Place Church, Boston.)

Answers to Puzzles in No. 26

Enigma.—Spring is coming.

Vacant Chairs.—Two.

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